AN ISLAND PEARL.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XV.

THE dark hours passed like a disturbed dream. Cries and sobs and prayers I heard, but indistinctly, as though I were in no way connected with them; they scarcely seemed to form part of the tragedy which was then being enacted. When I recovered my senses my first endeavor was to get to my feet, but I found I was pinned to the deck, by reason of the mast having fallen across my body. I believed that I was otherwise unharmed, for it did not appear to me that any of my bones were broken. But I was in this miserable position—I was lying with my face to the deck, and I could not see a yard around me. A faint light betokened that the sun was rising, and was making its way even into the dismal cave in which our ship was snared; otherwise I should have been in total darkness. I sighed in bitterness of spirit; the cup of happiness was dashed from my lips; all hope was gone. I should die without a word of love from my wife; for no power in the world could, at that moment, have convinced me that she, with my boy, was not a passenger in The Rising Sun. Had I not seen the likeness in little Bob's beautiful face? Had I not heard my wife's voice in the dark terror of the night? All my efforts to raise the weight which held me to the deck were vain, and I groaned aloud.

"Are you alive, then, mate?" a voice asked.

I managed to stretch forth my hand, and it reached the hand of a man who was pinned to the deck by the mast, as I was.

"Can you see?" I asked.

"Yes; and that is all I can do."

"Have you been conscious all the night?"

"All the night, worse luck. I have been envying you."

"You need not do so. In what position are we?"

"The ship is sinking; in a few minutes we shall reach the waterline."

"And then?"

He laughed bitterly. "You're no sailor, or you would not ask. And then? Why, then, Death—and I shall be glad to meet it. My two legs are broken."

"I pity you, I pity you!" I sighed. "Are you strong enough to talk to me?"

"Talking does me good. I shan't do much more of it in this world. What is it you want to know?"

"Where are the passengers?"

"In the sea, half of them—out of their trouble. I wish I was out of mine. I've seen them washed away by twos and threes and half dozens all through the night. The sea would have taken me, too, but this cursed mast wouldn't budge an inch. All's well for them. Good-night."

In his dare-devil, defiant mood, the man, whoever he was—for I never saw his face—actually sung these words.

"For heaven's sake," I implored, "do not answer me in that reckless way. You have been conscious all the night, you say. Has anything been done with the boats?"

"Yes. One quarter-boat was launched, and got safely out of this hole, I think. The other quarter-boat was also launched, and it isn't known what has become of it."

"Any passengers in the first?"

"A few."

"Women and children."

"Not likely. Men. Those who could scramble in first."

"Mate, do you understand the position I am in. I can't see a yard around me. I have a wife and child on board. The brutes! the brutes! not to save the women and children first! There are women and children still on deck, are there not?"

"Yes. You want to know if your wife is among them. What sort of a woman?"

"Fair, with light auburn hair, and blue eyes."

"Yes, yes—I knew one—— Bah! what's the use of thinking, now that everything has come to an end?"

"Look, mate!" I cried, for I felt that we were sinking fast. "Look, for God's sake! Do you see such a woman among those still left? And has she not a child with her?"

"What business is it of mine?" he replied, groaning with pain. "My eyes are getting too dim to see. Stay, though, I can just make out a woman with fair hair—— But the world's full of them!"

His pain must have been very great, from the way he dragged out his words.

"If I could relieve you, I would do so. Go on. Tell me what the woman is doing?"

"She has a child in her arms——"

"A boy?"

"I should say so."

"My boy—my son! Thank God! There may be still a chance for them. Ah, if I could but speak one word to them. Go on—go on."

"She is leaning over the bulwarks—ah, I see what for. There is a spar in the water, and a man, with one arm over it, has lashed a little girl to it. I see—I see! He intends to try and save the lot of them. He is calling out to the women—I can not hear what he says—ah, I suppose he is telling her to throw the boy to him. She bends toward him. Lord have mercy——"

And at that moment we were sucked down into the sea. With the last words he spoke, the ship had reached the water line, and sank in a wild whirl of waters. A prayer passed through my mind, and I believed my time had come. But the mast which had held me fastened to the deck now proved to be my salvation. Immediately the deck was below the water the mast floated off, leaving me free, and with the instinct of self-preservation I struck out lustily. I am a good swimmer, and shortly after I rose to the surface of the water my hands came upon a small piece of rock jutting up from the sea. Not knowing its size or extent, I obtained a risky foothold upon it, and, dashing the waters from my eyes, I looked eagerly forward. Surely it was by a special act of Providence that, amidst the struggling heads and limbs of the hapless drowning persons around me, I saw but one face, which rose like an apparition from the water. It was Mabel's face, turned toward the rock to which I clung, and in that awful moment we recognized each other. A look of convulsed joy, amazement, and terror—terror, as though she were gazing upon a being from another world—flashed into her eyes. Her arms were raised aloft, and in them was a child—my child, Bob! What was to be done in that dread moment of my life? If I plunged into the sea it would be fatal to all of us, for the drowning persons would inevitably clutch at me and carry me down with them, I decided instantly upon my plan. With one arm round the sharp rock, which cut into my flesh—but I did not feel it—I partially lowered myself into the water, and held out my other arm, which I judged would just reach Mabel, in the expectation that she would seize my hand and that I should be able to draw her to my rock of refuge. But as I laid my hand upon my boy, Mabel fell from me, or was torn from me by a fierce wave, and sunk before my eyes. With my boy pressed close to my bosom, I dashed forward in desperation to rescue her; but I was swept away by a rush of whirling spars from the wrecked ship, and, without knowing how it happened, I found myself being drawn into a boat which was lying off near the cave's mouth.

CHAPTER XVI.

I WAS told afterward that I struggled like a madman with those who were saving me; and I know it must have been because of the thought uppermost in my mind that I had no right to consider my own life while a chance remained to save that of my dear Mabel. But the men held me fast, and, when I was in the boat, began to pull away from the cave into the brighter light.

"It's no use struggling, mate," one said. "If you've a spark of reason in you, you'll see that there's no hope of saving another life."

They continued to pull doggedly away, and kept their hands upon me to prevent me from throwing myself into the water. Blinding tears came to my eyes and flowed over. I knew that it was vain to resist, and I knew besides that the few minutes that had intervened were fatal minutes, and carried death with them to the bright and beautiful girl who had become my wife, alas! how many Christmases ago! The mystery that had parted us would never now be made clear to me; but if anything could have comforted me at that awful period of my life, it was the belief that I still cherished in her faith and purity. Yet I looked sullenly on the cruel waters, repining, I do believe, because a miracle did not occur.

Some comfort did come to me after a while. I had my boy, my darling son, in my arms. Was it not almost by a miracle that he had been given to me, after searching for him the wide world over for seven long years? "You have still something to live for," a voice whispered to me; "be grateful, then." But I could not put by my sorrow so easily, and it was with mingled joy and grief that I hugged my boy closer to me, to keep him warm; for it was bitterly cold, and a mist had begun to fall, and was thickening every moment. No sign of life was on the sea; in the distance we saw the terrible coast-line, consisting of straight rocks of a tremendous height, affording not the remotest chance of effecting a landing. I scarcely remember how that day passed; I was in a stupor, lying at the bottom of the boat, whispering incoherent endearments into my little boy's ears. That he did not answer me did not surprise or hurt me; it pleased me that he should sleep so calmly during these cold and cheerless hours. To awaken him would have only aroused him to misery. Toward evening I became conscious that the men in the boat were directing strange glances toward me and my precious bundle.

"Come, mate," said one, "put aside that. We've enough weight in the boat without carrying the dead."

"Who did you say is dead?" I asked, vacantly, not understanding him.

Their significant looks answered me, and one man placed his hand on my little boy's heart. I pushed him aside fretfully.

"This is my son," I said, "for whom I've been searching these seven years past. I have only just found him. No, I am not mad; I am in my right senses. But this is not the time to tell you my story. My wife lies there"—I pointed to the cave. "I might have had her but for you. Let me be, then. I suppose some of you can understand what a father's love, what a husband's grief, is in such a trial as this."

"But don't you see?" the same man asked, and many of them looked at me with sad eyes. "Come, be reasonable. We are dead beat. You are as strong as we are. Lend a hand to an oar. Nay, then, if you'll not believe, look for yourself."

I allowed him to uncover the face of my boy, and the truth dawned upon me.

"Bob!" I whispered. "Speak to me, my son!"

I shook him gently; he made no movement. White and still, he lay in my arms. I put my ear to his mouth—to his heart; not a pulse replied to me. And then I saw that his limbs must have been cold and stiff for hours, and that I had been nursing a corpse.

"My boy is dead, mates," I said, with a strange calmness upon me. "Forgive me. I didn't know it before, you see. My poor little Bob!"

They turned their faces from me as I stooped and kissed Bob's white lips. Then I cried quietly over him a bit, and laid him at the bottom of the boat, covering him with my shirt, which I took off for the purpose.

"Let me keep him," I pleaded; "if we land, we can bury him ashore."

"Ay, ay, mate," they said, softly.

I answered them with grateful looks, and, taking an oar, pulled with the strength of a giant, drinking the salt tears which ran down my face. I worked mechanically, and had no thought for anything but the body of my poor little Bob.

Through the long hours of the night we pulled, and when the sun rose we found ourselves in the same dismal plight. The wind was dead in our teeth, and the rocks loomed black and shadowy in the distance. Having aboard only sufficient provisions for two days, it behooved us to find a refuge soon; and many a breath of thankfulness was drawn when, on the evening of the second day, we discovered a neck of land where we reckoned we could put safely ashore. Some part of the beach was sand, but ver ytreacherous, as we presently learned, and some was rock. We rowed toward the sandy beach, and one man jumped out—too soon for his life, for he sunk before our eyes. The quicksands had swallowed him. With feelings of awe we pulled toward the rocks, and after some difficulty we effected a landing, saving, too, at the risk of our lives, what little provisions we had left. But in the landing, our boat was dashed to splinters. And there, rescued from the sea, we stood upon the rocks in safety, I with my little Bob in my arms, wrapped in my serge shirt.

"Now for a fire," said one of the party; "I am perishing with cold. Let us collect some dry wood."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Safe Course.

An excellent reply was that once made by a Yankee pilot to the owner of a Mississippi river steamboat. The boat was at New Orleans, and the Yankee applied for the vacant post of pilot, saying that he thought he could give satisfaction, provided they were "lookin' for a man about his size and build." "Your size and build will do well enough," said the owner, surveying the lank form and rugged face of the applicant with some amusement, "but do you know about the river, where the snags are, and so on?" "Well, I'm pretty well acquainted with the river," drawled the Yankee, with his eyes fixed on a stick he was whittling, "but when you come to talkin' about the snags, I don't know exactly where they are, I must say."

"Don't know where the snags are!" said the boat owner, in a tone of disgust; "then how do you expect to get a position as pilot on this river?"

"Well, sir," said the Yankee, raising a pair of keen eyes from his whittling and meeting his questioner's stern gaze with a whimsical smile, "I may not know just where the snags are, but you can depend upon me for knowin' where they ain't, and that's where I calculate to do my sailin'."

Something for Nothing.

There is no form of deceit more likely to occur than self-deception, and of all kinds of self-deception none are more tempting than the things which happen when man endeavors to get something for nothing. Nor is it more reprehensible to get money in this way than it is to get a reputation without giving an equivalent—in fact, there is more damage in the latter than in the former proceeding. All sorts of gambling arise from the desire to get something for nothing without rendering adequate recompense, stock gambling and the bucket shops and its fruits. The world is twisted and torn by its tremendous tendency.—Rev. W. I. Chase.

Purity.

It would be easier to put the scales back again on the wing of the butterfly than to restore the purity that has been stained by vice. Samson was the strongest man of his age, but he could not break the cords of his own lusts. —Rev. Dr. Gumbart.

Greatness.

No matter from what class of society a man springs he can be great, for, after all, greatness is but goodness.—Rev. Lyman Abbott.

THE ROBIN'S NEST.

(Catharine Young Glen in Leslie's Popular Monthly.)

THE apple tree, nestling against the old white house, had put on its new spring gown. Never before did the leaves come out so green, nor the shy buds blush so deep a pink; never before did the bees hum so loudly, or the wind carry the fragrance so far.

On one of the sweetest mornings in all the May came two birds to the tree—two robins, in their honeymoon, who were out in search of a house. They put their heads first on this side, then on that; wished, perhaps, it had been a cherry tree; calculated the probable number of small boys in the neighborhood who were making collections of eggs; the angle-worm crop in the fields below; in short, all those minor details of house-hunting less interesting to an outsider than to parties concerned.

Robin Red Breast bent his head very near his wife, and they talked it all over with a great deal of twittering and many a tender glance!

"So sweet a spot, dear love! Shall it be here?" Nobody heard what the little bride-bird said. If she spoke at all it was very low—there was need that but one should hear—perhaps it was only a look. Be that as it may, the mate stretched his brown wings twice, thrice for the joy of it, and darted off and away, down over the meadow, his red breast twinkling above the green. "Home! home! home!" he sang over and over; "home! home!" His heart was overflowing, and he could not keep it to himself.

All this while his wee wife was taking account of her surroundings. She hopped on one twig, then on another, twisted her head, and turned her bright eyes, until one might justly conclude she had viewed the matter from every side. She saw one thing, too, that neither had noticed before. Through the open window, framed in with apple boughs, some one was watching them—a child with great dark eyes and a halo of golden hair. So sweet a face—but, oh, so thin and white! If the little bird had been on the bough just above she might have seen that the child sat in a large wheel-chair—sat without moving, her hands clasped in her lap, and hardly daring to breathe for fear of frightening the robins away.

The little bride-bird stood still, too, looked her all over, and waited. By the time her mate had finished his tour of the fields, however, for reasons best known to herself, she was ready to begin.

Should it be the crotch at the corner, or the one right under the window between the two big boughs? The crotch at the corner was wider, a fine breezy locality, but the other was so sheltered, no one could possibly peep from without. Some foolish people, you know, always will take to "love in a cottage." They wasted very few words over the matter—there is little argument when both argue on one side—it was all taken out in hopping and chirping.

"Mamma, mamma!" whispered the little girl at the window; "come softly! I think they are building a nest!" She turned her head by inches in her fear of making a stir. There was a light step, a rustle of silken skirts, and a lady stood by the chair—a lady who had eyes like the child's, dear eyes! in which the love almost covered the pain—quite hiding it when the little girl raised hers to look into them! Her hands played as by habit with the curly hair. She, too, looked out, not at the birds, but way beyond through the apple-boughs. "They?" she

SO SWEET A FACE.

asked, dreamily; "who, dear love?" and she used the very name, though she knew it not, that the little mate had just called his bride, for love is always the same.

"The robins," answered the child. "You are too high, mamma! Be soft! Right here, do you see? The dearest husband and wife, and he has the reddest breast, and they have been talking so! Listen, mamma, just hear!" In her excitement she spoke so fast that the mate-robin heard, and stopped short, with a long straw in his bill, which was to serve as a foundation for the house. He rolled his round eyes awhile, then turned and looked at his wife, but she was hopping about with the utmost unconcern; so after some reflection, he, too, went to work. "Oh!" breathed the little girl, with a long sigh of relief, "he is going to stay, after all. I thought I had scared him away."

The robins did not go, however, and in some mysterious way it came to be an understood thing that they should build their nest below the window, and that the little girl, and often the sweet lady, too, should watch. The shy wife might have told you that some of the shreds woven into the snug home had been found hanging conveniently on the twigs, as though they had fallen from the window, this, not to mention an ever-ready supply of crumbs, only waiting to be gathered when no one was at hand. In the bird-world, as in ours, fortune distributes her favors unevenly.

When the bright-eyed husband remembered how many of his friends had to support their families from the ash-barrels, there was a puffed feeling in his heart which he did not try to suppress.

So time went on, and by and by the bird's nest hung complete. The little girl had waited as patiently as the builders had worked, and their joy was one. "They also serve who only stand and wait," great Milton said—they, too, perhaps, who only love and wait.

THEY SHOULD WATCH.

"Mamma, mamma, there will be nestlings now, and the old birds will teach them to fly. I have longed to see it all my life, but I could not go to them, you know, and so they have come to me."

The mother noted the faint tinge on the cheek, the bright look in the eye, and blessed the robins in her heart.

"Yes, they have come to you, my bird—like to like—and you shall see them fly."

But birdlings do not grow in a day, and the child watched from the great wheel-chair with patience born of suffering, and a life of pain—watched until five round eggs lay in the nest, tinted with heaven's own blue.

At last—oh, the joy of it!—the blue shells broke, and five strange, soft things, with great eyes and yellow bills, nestled under the mother-wings—nestled and cuddled until the wings would hardly cover them, and the nest seemed all too small. The brown mother's heart was bursting with joy—so, for that matter, was the father's—but she kept her love to herself and it warmed the birdlings, while his ran over in one continual song from the top of the tree. The little girl looked like a guardian spirit from above.

"My birds, my birds!" she whispered, over her clasped hands; "my very, very own!"

The color that had come with the robins slowly faded from cheek and eye—as the birdlings in the nest grew stronger, the one in the old house grew weaker, and still the days went ... The father-robin sobered down with five wide mouths to feed, the mother had to stretch her wings a little further every night to keep the nestlings in. The apple buds had long since swelled into blossoms, the blossoms had flown off on the wind in scented showers, leaving the small, green balls that were to be apples in the far-off fall, and the leaves had turned to a darker hue. The little girl rested on pillows now, in the wheel-chair; her mother lifted her when she looked down into the nest.

"Mamma, how long will it be before the robins fly?" she asked.

The mother laid her head by the one on the pillow, and the child caught only the whisper that was not meant for her: "Oh, my love, my love!"

At last the wheel-chair stood alone by the window. The little girl lay very still within the curtained bed.

"I must not miss it," she whispered, morning and night. "You will watch, mamma, dear, will you not, and wake me—when—the birdlings—fly?"

The answer was always the same; "I am watching, I am watching! Lie still for a while and rest!"

The times for resting grew longer and the times for waking short.

The sun, sending his last shafts of light through the leaves one late afternoon, touched the eyes so often closed, and they opened at his kiss.

"Is it sunset?" she asked. "Take me up, mamma. I have not said good-night to the robins in so very long." Tenderly the mother lifted her, while the sweet breath of the meadow came up on the breeze, and the leaves were quivering in the golden light. The red-breasted robin was winging his way home; the brown mother was crooning a slumber song to her nest. The child stretched out her hands, the radiance glorifying face and hair. "Good-night, good-night, my birdlings! Mamma, see how the sun goes down! 'Twill be so beautiful—to-morrow—I think they will not stay!" The head drooped wearily on the pillow that night. "You will wake me—so early—mamma, dear!"

The stars shone and paled, the gray light stole slowly back again, and the faint, faint blue to the sky. And in the early morning One, long-awaited came, and two went out into the sunrise, into the hush of the sweet young day—leaving a void in the old white house that nothing on earth could fill.

The one who was left stood very still at the window, and looked through the apple boughs with eyes that saw them not. There was no need now that love should hide the pain. As she turned away her glance fell on the robin's nest. Lo! it was empty—only a broken shell lay where five birdlings had nestled beneath the mother's wings. Then the tears came to eyes that had not wept, and a great thanksgiving to an aching heart—for her darling, who had "wakened early," and for the robins, who had waited to fly with her.

WOMEN SMOKERS.

A Writer Who Approves of the Fair Sex Using Tobacco.

A recent writer on the subject of "Women Smokers" has something to say that may prove interesting reading to dramatists, stage managers and theater-goers generally, says the New York Telegram. Here it is:

"When in a play a well-dressed woman produces a cigarette case and begins to light up you know at once she is the adventuress of the piece. The dramatist would never dare to endow her with any moral qualities after that. She may possibly be a divorcee; at the very least she has designs on the hero's purse and on his general happiness. Who ever saw a virtuous stage heroine smoking? The very idea would be revolting to all conventional notions of propriety and the men would fiercely discuss this horrifying lapse on the part of the dramatist over their own cigarettes between the acts. The supposed degrading effect of tobacco on women is purely a bourgeois notion. It affects middle-class women only. The highest and the lowest do as they please in the matter. Now and then there arises some strong and independent woman who follows her own course and is perfectly indifferent to outside opinion. Such a character was the late Miss Emily Faithful, a most noble, admirable and withal womanly minded woman, who soothed her nerves after her work was done by smoking full-flavored cigars. * * * The peasant women, especialy in Ireland and Scotland, enjoy their whiffs from short pipes filled with strong tobacco. * * * No! I'm not advocating the use of short clays among the wide class covered by the word 'ladies,' but for the life of me I cannot see what harm is done to these peasant women by the process of puffing off their cares in their own way. In the best houses nowadays when cigars are handed around to the gentlemen cigarettes are offered to the ladies. The hostess, as a rule, sets the necessary example to her lady guests. The ranks of the regular cigarette smokers include the dowager empress of Russia, the Princess of Wales, Princess Beatrice, Princess Charles of Denmark, the Queen of Italy, the Queen of Roumania and the Queen Regent of Spain. I have no space for a list of prominent members of the English aristocracy who indulge in the fragrant weed. * * * It is only the middle-class person of would-be intensely respectable manners who raises all this racket against the feminine consumption of cigarettes."

Had Lots of Them.

Nonte—"Oh, look at Count Makoronni and the number of orders he is wearing. They say he has a magnificent collection."

Laura—"He ought to, for before he got his patrimony he was a waiter in a cheap restaurant."—Pittsburg News.

WORTH READING.

At the end of each hair of a cat's whiskers is a bulb of nerve fiber which makes that particular hair a very delicate "feeler."

It is proposed in Finland to abolish the press censorship, on the ground that it is needless, and only fosters hypocrisy and deception.

The oldest, and, perhaps, the heaviest cyclist for his age, is J. W. Arnold, of Providence, now in his eighty-sixth year, weight 196 pounds.

Nearly 4,000,000 women, or 18 per cent of all women in the United States, were in 1890 engaged in earning their own living in some trade or employment.

Some of the lumber trade journals are writing in favor of soft elm for the finish of buildings, and assert that wherever it has been used in western cities it has proved very satisfactory.

The poor laborers in the Sicilian sulphur mines compel their naked children from the tenth year to assist them in their hard work, their only food being coarse bread dipped into oil.

George Peabody's donation of $2,500,000 for London workingmen's houses has increased to $6,000,000 in the twenty-four years since his death. Last year the trustees of the fund provided 11,367 rooms, besides bath rooms, lavatories and laundries; 19,854 persons occupied them. The death rate of infants in the buildings is 4 per cent below the average for London.

Horses are valuable in Alaska. They are driven up over the divide from the Canadian plains, and then have to be transported eight to sixteen miles by water. The freight on them for this distance is 40 cents a pound, so that a 1,000-pound horse gets to be worth $1 a pound by the time he nears a place where he can be of good service. A good strong dog is valued at $75.

A Polish chemist named Eisenberg is said to have invented an anaesthetic which volatilizes rapidly on exposure to the air, rendering the persons near unconscious for a long time. A pellet broken under a man's nose put him to sleep for four hours. It is asserted that in warfare bombs charged with this material will make large bodies of an enemy incapable of resistance.